

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 329
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Dante's Inferno

Volume I



TEN CENT POCKET SERIES NO. 329

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Dante's Inferno

Volume I

**HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS**

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DANTE'S INFERNO.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

The Poet, having lost his way in a gloomy forest, and being hindered by certain wild beasts from ascending a mountain, is met by Virgil, who promises to show him the punishments of Hell, and afterwards of Purgatory; and that he shall then be conducted by Beatrice into Paradise. He follows the Roman poet.

IN the midway of this our mortal life,
I found me in a gloomy wood, astray,
Gone from the path direct: and e'en to tell,
It were no easy task, how savage wild
That forest, how robust and rough its growth,
Which to remember only, my dismay
Renews, in bitterness not far from death.
Yet to discourse of what there good befell,
All else will I relate discovered there.

How first I entered it I scarce can say,
Such sleepy dulness in that instant weighed
My senses down, when the true path I left;
But when a mountain's foot I reached, where
closed

The valley that had pierced my heart with
dread,

I looked aloft, and saw his shoulders broad
Already vested with that planet's beam,
Who leads all wanderers safe through every
way.

Then was a little respite to the fear,
That in my heart's recesses deep had lain,
All of that night, so pitifully past:
And as a man, with difficult short breath,
Forespent with toiling, 'scaped from sea to
shore,

Turns to the perilous wide waste, and stands
At gaze; e'en so my spirit, that yet failed
Struggling with terror, turned to view the
straits,

That none hath past and lived. My weary
frame

After short pause recomforted, again
I journeyed on over that lonely steep,
The hinder foot still firmer. Scarce the ascent
Began, when, lo! a panther, nimble, light,
And covered with a speckled skin, appeared;
Nor, when it saw me, vanished, rather strove
To check my onward going; that ofttimes,
With purpose to retrace my steps, I turned.

The hour was morning's prime, and on his
way

Aloft the sun ascended with those stars,
That with him rose when Love divine first
moved

Those its fair works; so that with joyous hope
All things conspired to fill me, the gay skin
Of that swift animal, the matin dawn
And the sweet season. Soon that joy was chased,
And by a new dread succeeded, when in view
A lion came, 'gainst me, as it appeared,
With his head held aloft and hunger-mad,
That e'en the air was fear-struck. A she-wolf
Was at his heels, who in her leanness seemed
Full of all wants, and many a land hath made
Disconsolate ere now. She with such fear
O'erwhelmed me, at the sight of her appalled,
That of the height all hope I lost. As one,
Who, with his gain elated, sees the time
When all unwares is gone, he inwardly
Mourns with heart-gripping anguish; such was I,
Haunted by that fell beast, never at peace,
Who coming o'er against me, by degrees
Impelled me where the sun in silence rests.

While to the lower space with backward step
I fell, my ken discerned the form of one,
Whose voice seemed faint through long disuse
of speech.

When him in that great desert I espied,
"Have mercy on me," cried I out aloud,
"Spirit! or living man! whate'er thou be!"

He answered: "Now not man, man once I
was,

And born of Lombard parents, Mantuans both
By country, when the power of Julius yet
Was scarcely firm. At Rome my life was past
Beneath the mild Augustus, in the time

Of fabled deities and false. A bard
Was I, and made Anchises' upright son
The subject of my song, who came from Troy,
When the flames preyed on Ilium's haughty
towers.

But thou, say wherefore to such perils past
Return'st thou? wherefore not this pleasant
mount

Ascendest, cause and source of all delight?"
"And art thou then that Virgil, that well-
spring,

From which such copious floods of eloquence
Have issued?" I with front abashed replied.
"Glory and light of all the tuneful train!

May it avail me, that I long with zeal
Have sought thy volume, and with love im-
mense

Have conned it o'er. My master thou, and
guide!

Thou be from whom alone I have derived
That style, which for its beauty into fame
Exalts me. See the beast, from whom I fled.
O save me from her, thou illustrious sage!
For every vein and pulse throughout my
frame

She hath made tremble." He, soon as he saw
That I was weeping, answered, "Thou must
needs

Another way pursue, if thou wouldst 'scape
From out that savage wilderness. This beast,
t whom thou criest, her way will suffer none

DANTE'S INFERNO

To pass, and no less hindrance makes than
death:

So bad and so accursed in her kind,
That never sated is her ravenous will,
Still after food more craving than before,
To many an animal in wedlock vile
She fastens, and shall yet to many more,
Until that greyhound come, who shall destroy
Her with sharp pain. He will not life support
By earth nor its base metals, but by love,
Wisdom, and virtue, and his land shall be
The land 'twixt either Feltro. In his might
Shall safety to Italia's plains arise,
For whose fair realm, Camilla, virgin pure,
Nisus Euryalus, and Turnus fell.

He, with incessant chase, through every town
Shall worry, until he to hell at length
Restore her, thence by envy first let loose.

I for thy profit pondering now devise,
That thou mayst follow me; and I, thy guide,
Will lead thee hence through an eternal space,
Where thou shalt hear despairing shrieks, and
see

Spirits of old tormented, who invoke
A second death; and those next view, who
- dwell

Content in fire, for that they hope to come,
Whene'er the time may be, among the blest,
Into whose regions if thou then desire
To ascend, a spirit worthier than I [part
Must lead thee, in whose charge ~~her~~ I do

Thou shalt be left: for that Almighty King,
Who reigns above, a rebel to his law
Adjudges me; and therefore hath decreed
That, to his city, none through me should
come. [holds

He in all parts hath sway; there rules, there
His citadel and throne. O happy those,
Whom there he chooses!" I to him in few:
"Bard! by that God, whom thou didst not
adore,

I do beseech thee (that this ill and worse
I may escape) to lead me, where thou said'st,
That I Saint Peter's gate may view, and those
Who, as thou tell'st, are in such dismal plight."

Onward he moved, I close his steps pursued.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

After the invocation, which poets are used to prefix to their works, he shows that, on a consideration of his own strength, he doubted whether it sufficed for the journey proposed to him, but that, being comforted by Virgil, he at last took courage, and followed him as his guide and master.

Now was the day departing, and the air,
Imbrowned with shadows, from their toils released

All animals on earth; and I alone

Prepared myself the conflict to sustain,
Both of sad pity, and that perilous road,
Which my unerring memory shall retrace.

O Muses! O high genius! now vouchsafe
Your aid! O mind! that all I saw hast kept
Safe in a written record, here thy worth
And eminent endowments come to proof.

I thus began: "Bard! thou who art my
guide,

Consider well, if virtue be in me
Sufficient, ere to this high enterprise
Thou trust me. Thou hast told that Silvius'
sire,

Yet, clothed in corruptible flesh, among
The immortal tribes had entrance, and was
there

Sensibly present. Yet if heaven's great Lord,
Almighty foe to ill, such favor showed,
In contemplation of the high effect,
Both what and who from him should issue
forth,

It seems in reason's judgment well deserved:
Sith he of Rome and of Rome's empire wide,
In heaven's empyreal height was chosen sire:
Both which, if truth be spoken, were ordained
And 'stablished for the holy place, where sits
Who to great Peter's sacred chair succeeds.
He from this journey, in thy song renowned,
Learned things, that to his victory gave rise
And to the papal robe. In after-times
The chosen vessel also travelled there.

To bring us back assurance in that faith
Which is the entrance to salvation's way.
But I, why should I there presume? or who
Permits it? not Æneas I, nor Paul,
Myself I deem not worthy, and none else
Will deem me. I, if on this voyage then
I venture, fear it will in folly end.
Thou, who art wise, better my meaning
 know'st
Than I can speak." As one, who unresolves
What he hath late resolved, and with new
 thoughts
Changes his purpose, from his first intent
Removed; e'en such was I on that dun coast,
Wasting in thought my enterprise, at first
So eagerly embraced. "If right thy words
I scan," replied that shade magnanimous,
"Thy soul is by vile fear assailed, which oft
So overcasts a man, that he recoils
From noblest resolution, like a beast
At some false semblance in the twilight gloom.
That from this terror thou mayst free thyself,
' will instruct thee why I came, and what
I heard in that same instant, when for thee
Grief touched me first. I was among the
 tribe,
Who rest suspended, when a dame, so blest
And lovely I besought her to command,
Called me; her eyes were brighter than the
 star
Of day; and she with gentle voice and soft,

Angelically tuned, her speech addressed:
'O courteous shade of Mantua! thou whose
fame

Yet lives, and shall live long as nature lasts!
A friend, not of my fortune but myself,
On the wide desert in his road has met
Hindrance so great, that he through fear has
turned.

Now much I dread lest he past help have
strayed,

And I be risen too late for his relief,
From what in heaven of him I heard. Speed
now,

And by thy eloquent persuasive tongue,
And by all means for his deliverance meet,
Assist him. So to me will comfort spring.
I, who bid thee on this errand forth,
Am Beatrice; from a place I come
Revisited with joy. Love brought me thence,
Who prompts my speech. When in my Master's sight

I stand, thy praise to him I oft will tell.'

"She then was silent, and I thus began:
'O Lady! by whose influence alone,
Mankind excels whatever is contained
Within that heaven which hath the smallest
orb,

So thy command delights me, that to obey,
If it were done already, would seem late.
No need hast thou further to speak thy will;
Yet tell the reason, why thou art not loth

To leave that ample space, where to return
Thou burnest, for this centre here beneath.

"She then: 'Since thou so deeply wouldst
inquire,

I will instruct thee briefly, why no dread
Hinders my entrance here. Those things alone
Are to be feared, whence evil may proceed;
None else, for none are terrible beside.

I am so framed by God, thanks to his grace!
That any sufferance of your misery
Touches me not, nor flame of that fierce fire
Assails me. In high heaven a blessed dame
Resides, who mourns with such effectual grief.
That hindrance, which I send thee to remove,
That God's stern judgment to her will inclines.
To Lucia calling, her she thus bespake:

"Now doth thy faithful servant need thy aid,
And I commend him to thee." At her word
Sped Lucia, of all cruelty the foe,
And coming to the place, where I abode
Seated with Rachel, her of ancient days,
She thus addressed me: "Thou true praise of
God!

Beatrice! why is not thy succor lent
To him, who so much loved thee, as to leave
For thy sake all the multitude admires?
Dost thou not hear how pitiful his wail,
Nor mark the death, which in the torrent
flood,

Swoln mightier than a sea, him struggling
holds?"

Ne'er among men did any with such speed
Haste to their profit, flee from their annoy,
As, when these words were spoken, I came
here,

Down from my blessed seat, trusting the force
Of thy pure eloquence, which thee, and all
Who well have marked it, into honor brings.'

"When she had ended, her bright beaming
eyes

Tearful she turned aside; whereat I felt
Redoubled zeal to serve thee. As she willed,
Thus am I come: I saved thee from the beast,
Who thy near way across the goodly mount
Prevented. What is this comes o'er thee then?
Why, why dost thou hang back? why in thy
breast

Harbor vile fear? why hast not courage there,
And noble daring; since three maids, so blest,
Thy safety plan, e'en in the court of heaven;
And so much certain good my words fore-
bode?"

As florets, by the frosty air of night
Bent down and closed, when day has blanched
their leaves,

Rise all unfolded on their spiry stems;
So was my fainting vigor new restored,
And to my heart such kindly courage ran,
That I as one undaunted soon replied:

"O full of pity she, who undertook
My succor! and thou kind who didst perform
So soon her true behest! With such desire

Thou hast disposed me to renew my voyage,
That my first purpose fully is resumed.
Lead on: one only will is in us both.
Thou art my guide, my master thou, and
lord."

So spake I; and when he had onward
moved,
I entered on the deep and woody way.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, following Virgil, comes to the gate of Hell; where, after having read the dreadful words that are written thereon, they both enter. Here, as he understands from Virgil, those were punished who had past their time (for living it could not be called) in a state of apathy and indifference both to good and evil. Then pursuing their way, they arrive at the river Acheron; and there find the old ferryman Charon, who takes the spirits over to the opposite shore; which as soon as Dante reaches, he is seized with terror, and falls into a trance.

"THROUGH me you pass into the city of woe:
Through me you pass into eternal pain:
Through me among the people lost for aye
Justice the founder of my fabric moved:
To rear me was the task of power divine,
Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.
Before me things create were none, save things
Eternal, and eternal I endure.

All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

Such characters in color dim, I marked
Over a portal's lofty arch inscribed:
Whereat I thus: "Master, these words import
Hard meaning." He as one prepared replied:
"Here thou must all distrust behind thee
leave;

Here be vile fear extinguished. We are come
Where I have told thee we shall see the souls
To misery doomed, who intellectual good
Have lost." And when his hand he had
stretched forth [cheered,
To mine, with pleasant looks, whence I was
Into that secret place he led me on.

Here sighs, with lamentations and loud
moans,
Resounded through the air pierced by no star,
That e'en I wept at entering. Various tongues,
Horrible languages, outcries of woe,
Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse,
With hands together smote that swelled the
sounds,
Made up a tumult, that forever whirls
Round through that air with solid darkness
stained,
Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies.

I then, with error yet encompassed, cried:
"O master! what is this I hear? what race
Are these, who seem so overcome with woe?"

He thus to me: "This miserable fate
Suffer the wretched souls of those, who lived

Without or praise or blame, with that ill band
Of angels mixed, who nor rebellious proved
Or yet were true to God, but for themselves
Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove
them forth,

Not to impair his lustre; nor the depth
Of Hell receives them, lest the accursed tribe
Should glory thence with exultation vain."

I then: "Master! what doth aggrrieve them
thus,

That they lament so loud?" He straight replied:

"That will I tell thee briefly. These of death
No hope may entertain; and their blind life
So meanly passes, that all other lots
They envy. Fame of them the world hath
none,

Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them
both.

Speak not of them, but look, and pass them
by."

And I, who straightway looked, beheld a flag,
Which whirling ran around so rapidly,
That it no pause obtained: and following came
Such a long train of spirits, I should ne'er
Have thought that death so many had de-
spoiled.

When some of these I recognized, I saw
And knew the shade of him, who to base fear
Yielding, abjured his high estate. Forthwith
I understood, for certain, this the tribe

Of those ill spirits both to God displeasing
And to his foes. These wretches, who ne'er
lived,

Went on in nakedness, and sorely stung
By wasps and hornets, which bedewed their
cheeks

With blood, that, mixed with tears, dropped
to their feet,

And by disgustful worms was gathered there.

Then looking farther onwards, I beheld
A throng upon the shore of a great stream:
Whereat I thus: "Sir! grant me now to know
Whom here we view, and whence impelled they
seem

So eager to pass o'er, as I discern
Through the blear light?" He thus to me in
few:

"This shalt thou know, soon as our steps ar-
rive

Beside the woeful tide of Acheron."

Then with eyes downward cast, and filled
with shame,

Fearing my words offensive to his ear,
Till we had reached the river, I from speech
Abstained. And lo! toward us in a bark
Comes on an old man, hoary white with eld,
Crying, "Woe to you, wicked spirits! hope not
Ever to see the sky again. I come
To take you to the other shore across,
Into eternal darkness, there to dwell
In fierce heat and in ice. And thou, who there

Standest, live spirit! get thee hence, and leave
These who are dead." But soon as he beheld
I left them not, "By other way," said he,
"By other haven shalt thou come to shore,
Not by this passage; thee a nimbler boat
Must carry." Then to him thus spake my
guide:

"Charon! thyself torment not: so 'tis willed,
Where will and power are one: ask thou no
more."

Straightway in silence fell the shaggy cheeks
Of him, the boatman o'er the livid lake,
Around whose eyes glared wheeling flames.
Meanwhile

Those spirits, faint and naked, color changed,
And gnashed their teeth, soon as the cruel
words [blasphemed,
They heard. God and their parents they
The human kind, the place, the time, and seed,
That did engender them and give them birth.

Then all together sorely wailing drew
To the curst strand, that every man must pass
Who fears not God. Charon, demoniac form,
With eyes of burning coal, collects them all,
Beckoning, and each, that lingers, with his oar
Strikes. As fall off the light autumnal leaves,
One still another following, till the bough
Strews all its honors on the earth beneath;
E'en in like manner Adam's evil brood
Cast themselves, one by one, down from the
shore,

Each at a beck, as falcon at his call.

Thus go they over through the umbered
wave;

And even they on the opposing bank
Be landed, on this side another throng
Still gathers. "Son," thus spake the courteous
guide,

"Those who die subject to the wrath of God
All here together come from every clime,
And to o'erpass the river are not loth:
For so heaven's justice goads them on, that
fear

Is turned into desire. Hence ne'er hath past
Good spirit. If of thee Charon complain,
Now mayst thou know the import of his
words."

This said, the gloomy region trembling shook
So terribly, that yet with clammy dew
Fear chills my brow. The sad earth gave a
blast,

That, lightening, shot forth a vermillion flame,
Which all my senses conquered quite, and I
Down dropped, as one with sudden slumber
seized.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

The poet, being roused by a clap of thunder, and following his guide onwards, descends into Limbo, which is the first circle of Hell, where he finds the souls of those, who, although they

have lived virtuously and have not to suffer for great sins, nevertheless, through lack of baptism, merit not the bliss of Paradise. Hence he is led on by Virgil to descend into the second circle.

BROKE the deep slumber in my brain a crash
Of heavy thunder, that I shook myself,
As one by main force roused. Risen upright,
My rested eyes I moved around, and searched,
With fixed ken, to know what place it was
Wherein I stood. For certain, on the brink
I found me of the lamentable vale,
The dread abyss, that joins a thunderous
 sound

Of plaints innumerable. Dark and deep,
And thick with clouds o'erspread, mine eye
 in vain

Explored its bottom, nor could aught discern.

"Now let us to the blind world there beneath
Descend;" the bard began, all pale of look:

"I go the first, and thou shalt follow next."

Then I, his altered hue perceiving, thus:
"How may I speed, if thou yielddest to dread,
Who still art wont to comfort me in doubt?"

He then: "The anguish of that race below
With pity stains my cheek, which thou for fear
Mistakest. Let us on. Our length of way
Urges haste." Onward, this said, he moved;
And entering led me with him, on the bounds
Of the first circle that surrounds the abyss.
Here, as mine ear could note, no plaint was
 heard

Except of sighs, that made the eternal air
Tremble, not caused by tortures, but from
grief

Felt by those multitudes, many and vast,
Of men, women, and infants. Then to me
The gentle guide: "Inquietrest thou not what
spirits

Are these, which thou beholdest? Ere thou pass
Farther, I would thou know, that these of sin
Were blameless; and if aught they merited,
It profits not, since baptism was not theirs,
The portal to thy faith. If they before
The Gospel lived, they served not God aright;
And among such am I. For these defects,
And for no other evil, we are lost;
Only so far afflicted, that we live
Desiring without hope." Scarcely grief assailed
My heart at hearing this, for well I knew
Suspended in that Limbo many a soul
Of mighty worth. "O tell me, sire revered!
Tell me, my master!" I began, through wish
Of full assurance in that holy faith
Which vanquishes all error; "say, did e'er
Any, or through his own or other's merit,
Come forth from thence, who afterward was
blest?"

Piercing the secret purport of my speech,
He answered: "I was new to that estate,
When I beheld a puissant one arrive
Amongst us, with victorious trophy crowned.
He forth the shade of our first parent drew

Abel his child, and Noah righteous man,
Of Moses lawgiver for faith approved,
Of patriarch Abraham, and David king,
Israel with his sire and with his sons,
Nor without Rachel whom so hard he won,
And others many more, whom he to bliss
Exalted. Before these, be thou assured,
No spirit of human kind was ever saved."

We, while he spake, ceased not our onward
road,
Still passing through the wood; for so I name
Those spirits thick beset. We were not far
On this side from the summit, when I kenned
A flame, that o'er the darkened hemisphere
Prevailing shined. Yet we a little space
Were distant, not so far but I in part
Discovered, that a tribe in honor high
That place possessed. "O thou, who every art
And science valuest! who are these, that boast
Such honor, separate from all the rest?"

He answered: "The renown of their great
names,
That echoes through your world above, ac-
quires
Favor in heaven, which holds them thus ad-
vanced."

Meantime a voice I heard: "Honor the bard
Sublime! his shade returns, that left us late!"
No sooner ceased the sound, than I beheld
Four mighty spirits toward us bend their steps,
Of semblance neither sorrowful nor glad.

When thus my master kind began: "Mark
him,
Who in his right hand bears that falchion keen,
The other three preceding, as their lord.
This is that Homer, of all bards supreme:
Flaccus the next, in satire's vein excelling;
The third is Naso; Lucan is the last.
Because they all that appellation own,
With which the voice singly accosted me,
Honoring they greet me thus, and well they
judge."

So I beheld united the bright school
Of him the monarch of sublimest song,
That o'er the others like an eagle soars.

When they together short discourse had held,
They turned to me, with salutation kind
Beckoning me; at the which my master
smiled:

Nor was this all; but greater honor still
They gave me, for they made me of their tribe;
And I was sixth amid so learned a band.

Far as the luminous beacon on we passed
Speaking of matters, then befitting well
To speak, now fitter left untold. At foot
Of a magnificent castle we arrived,
Seven times with lofty walls begirt, and round
Defended by a pleasant stream. O'er this
As o'er dry land we passed. Next, through
seven gates,

I with those sages entered, and we came
Into a mead with lively verdure fresh.

There dwelt a race, who slow their eyes
around

Majestically moved, and in their port
Bore eminent authority; they spake
Seldom, but all their words were tuneful sweet.

We to one side retired, into a place
Open and bright and lofty, whence each one
Stood manifest to view. Incontinent
There on the green enamel of the plain
Were shown me the great spirits, by whose
sight

I am exalted in my own esteem.

Electra there I saw accompanied
By many, among whom Hector I knew,
Anchises' pious son, and with hawk's eye
Caesar all armed, and by Camilla there
Penthesilea. On the other side,
Old King Latinus, seated by his child
Lavinia, and that Brutus I beheld,
Who Tarquin chased, Lucretia, Cato's wife,
Marcia, with Julia and Cornelia there;
And sole apart retired, the Soldan fierce.

Then when a little more I raised my brow,
I spied the master of the sapient throng,
Seated amid the philosophic train.
Him all admire, all pay him reverence due.
There Socrates and Plato both I marked,
Nearest to him in rank, Democritus,
Who sets the world at chance, Diogenes,
With Heraclitus, and Empedocles,
And Anaxagoras, and Thales sage,

Zeno, and Dioscorides well read
In nature's secret lore. Orpheus I marked
And Linus, Tully and moral Seneca,
Euclid and Ptolemy, Hippocrates,
Galenus, Avicen, and him who made
That commentary vast, Averroes.

Of all to speak at full were vain attempt;
For my wide theme so urges, that ofttimes
My words fall short of what bechanced. In two
The six associates part. Another way
My sage guide leads me, from that air serene,
Into a climate ever vexed with storms:
And to a part I come, where no light shines.

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

Coming into the second circle of Hell, Dante at the entrance beholds Minos the Infernal Judge, by whom he is admonished to beware how he enters those regions. Here he witnesses the punishment of carnal sinners, who are tossed about ceaselessly in the dark air by the most furious winds. Amongst these, he meets with Francesca of Rimini, through pity at whose sad tale he falls fainting to the ground.

FROM the first circle I descended thus
Down to the second, which, a lesser space
Embracing, so much more of grief contains,
Provoking bitter moans. Their Minos stands
Grinning with ghastly feature: he, of all
Who enter, strict examining the crimes,

Gives sentence, and dismisses them beneath,
According as he foldeth him around:
For when before him comes the ill-fated soul,
It all confesses; and that judge severe
Of sins, considering what place in hell
Suits the transgression, with his tail so oft
Himself encircles, as degrees beneath
He dooms it to descend. Before him stand
Always a numerous throng; and in his turn
Each one to judgment passing, speaks, and
hears
His fate, thence downward to his dwelling
hurled.

"O thou! who to this residence of woe
Approachest?" when he saw me coming, cried
Minos, relinquishing his dread employ,
"Look how thou enter here; beware in whom
Thou place thy trust; let not the entrance
broad

Deceive thee to thy harm." To him my guide:
"Wherefore exclaimest? Hinder not his way
By destiny appointed; so 'tis willed
Where will and power are one. Ask thou no
more."

Now 'gin the rueful wailings to be heard.
Now am I come where many a plaining voice
Smites on mine ear. Into a place I came
Where light was silent all. Bellowing there
groaned

A noise, as of a sea in tempest torn
By warring wings. The stormy blast of hell

With restless fury drives the spirits on,
Whirled round and dashed amain with sore
 annoy.

When they arrive before the ruinous sweep,
There shrieks are heard, there lamentations,
 moans,

And blasphemies 'gainst the good Power in
 heaven.

I understood that to this torment sad
The carnal sinners are condemned, in whom
Reason by lust is swayed. As in large troops
And multitudinous, when winter reigns,
The starlings on their wings are borne
 abroad;

So bears the tyrannous gust those evil souls
On this side and on that, above, below,
It drives them: hope of rest to solace them
Is none, nor e'en of milder pang. As cranes,
Chanting their dolorous notes, traverse the
 sky,

Stretched out in long array; so I beheld
Spirits, who came loud wailing, hurried on
By their dire doom. Then I: "Instructor!
 who

Are these, by the black air so scourged?"—
 "The first

'Mong those, of whom thou question'st," he
 replied,

"O'er many tongues was empress. She in vice
Of luxury was so shameless, that she made
Liking be lawful by promulged decree,

To clear the blame she had herself incurred
This is Semiramis, of whom 'tis writ,
That she succeeded Ninus her espoused;
And held the land, which now the Soldan
rules.

The next in amorous fury slew herself,
And to Sicheus' ashes broke her faith:
Then follows Cleopatra, lustful queen."

There marked I Helen, for whose sake so
long
The time was fraught with evil; there the
great

Achilles, who with love fought to the end.
Paris I saw, and Tristan; and beside,
A thousand more he showed me, and by name
Pointed them out, whom love bereaved of life.

When I had heard my sage instructor name
Those dames and knights of antique days,
o'erpowered

By pity, well-nigh in amaze my mind
Was lost; and I began: "Bard! willingly
I would address those two together coming,
Which seem so light before the wind." He
thus:

"Note thou, when nearer they to us approach.
Then by that love which carries them along,
Entreat; and they will come." Soon as the
wind

Swayed them toward us, I thus framed my
speech:

"O wearied spirits! come, and hold discourse

With us, if by none else restrained." As doves
By fond desire invited, on wide wings
And firm, to their sweet nest returning home,
Cleave the air, wafted by their will along;
Thus issued, from that troop, where Dido
ranks,

They, through the ill air speeding; with such
force

My cry prevailed by strong affection urged.

"O gracious creature and benign! who goest
Visiting, through this element obscure,
Us, who the world with bloody stain imbrued;
If, for a friend the King of all, we owned,
Our prayer to him should for thy peace arise,
Since thou hast pity on our evil plight.

Of whatsoe'er to hear or to discourse
It pleases thee, that will we hear, of that
Freely with thee discourse, while e'er the
wind,

As now, is mute. The land, that gave me
birth,

Is situate on the coast, where Po descends
To rest in ocean with his sequent streams.

"Love, that in gentle heart is quickly learnt,
Entangled him by that fair form, from me
Ta'en in such cruel sort, as grieves me still:
Love, that denial takes from none beloved,
Caught me with pleasing him so passing well.
That, as thou seest, he yet deserts me not.
Love brought us to one death: Caina waits

The soul, who spilt our life." Such were their words:

At hearing which downward I bent my looks,
And held them there so long, that the bard
cried:

"What art thou pond'ring?" I in answer thus:
"Alas! by what sweet thoughts, what fond
desire

Must they at length to that ill pass have
reached!"

Then turning, I to them my speech addressed.

And thus began: "Francesca! your sad fate
Even to tears my grief and pity moves.

But tell me; in the time of your sweet sighs,
By what, and how love granted, that ye knew
Your yet uncertain wishes?" She replied:

"No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand! That kens
Thy learned instructor. Yet so eagerly

If thou art bent to know the primal root,
From whence our love gat being, I will do,
As one, who weeps and tells his tale. One day,
For our delight we read of Lancelot,

How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no
Suspicion near us. Ofttimes by that reading
Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue
Fled from our altered cheek. But at one point
Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,
The wished smile, rapturously kissed

By one so deep in love, then he, who ne'er

From me shall separate, at once my lips
All trembling kissed. The book and writer
both

Were love's purveyors. In its leaves that day
We read no more." While thus one spirit
spake,

The other wailed so sorely, that heart-struck
I, through compassion fainting, seemed not far
From death, and like a corpse fell to the
ground.

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

On his recovery, the Poet finds himself in the third circle, where the gluttonous are punished. Their torment is, to lie in the mire, under a continual and heavy storm of hail, snow, and discolored water; Cerberus meanwhile barking over them with his threefold throat, and rending them piecemeal. One of these, who on earth was named Ciaccio, foretells the divisions with which Florence is about to be distracted. Dante proposes a question to his guide, who solves it and they proceed towards the fourth circle.

My sense reviving, that erewhile had drooped
With pity for the kindred shades, whence
grief

O'ercame me wholly, straight around I see
New torments, new tormented souls, which way
Soe'er I move, or turn, or bend my sight.
In the third circle I arrive, of showers

Ceaseless, accursed, heavy and cold, unchanged
Forever, both in kind and in degree.

Large hail, discolored water, sleety flaw
Through the dun midnight air streamed down
 again:

Stank all the land whereon that tempest fell.

Cerberus, cruel monster, fierce and strange,
Through his wide threefold throat, barks as a
 dog

Over the multitude immersed beneath.

His eyes glare crimson, black his unctuous
 beard,

His belly large, and clawed the hands, with
 which

He tears the spirits, flays them, and their
 limbs

Piecemeal disparts. Howling there spread, as
 curs,

Under the rainy deluge, with one side

The other screening, oft they roll them round,
A wretched, godless crew. When that great
 worm

Descried us, savage Cerberus, he oped

His jaws, and the fangs showed us; not a
 limb

Of him but trembled. Then my guide, his
 palms

Expanding on the ground, thence filled with
 earth

Raised them, and cast it in his ravenous maw.
E'en as a dog, that yelling bays for food

His keeper, when the morsel comes, lets fall
His fury, bent alone with eager haste
To swallow it; so dropped the loathsome
cheeks

Of demon Cerberus, who thundering stuns
The spirits, that they for deafness wish in
vain.

We, o'er the shades thrown prostrate by the
brunt

Of the heavy tempest passing, set our feet
Upon their emptiness, that substance seemed.

They all along the earth extended lay,
Save one, that sudden raised himself to sit,
Soon as that way he saw us pass. "O thou!"
He cried, "who through the infernal shades
art led,

Own, if again thou know'st me. Thou wast
framed

Or ere my frame was broken." I replied:
"The anguish thou endurest perchance so takes
Thy form from my remembrance, that it seems
As if I saw thee never. But inform
Me who thou art, that in a place so sad
Art set, and in such torment, that although
Other be greater, none disgusteth more."

He thus in answer to my words rejoined:
"Thy city heaped with envy to the brim,
Aye, that the measure overflows its bounds,
Held me in brighter days. Ye citizens
Were wont to name me Ciacco. For the sin
Of gluttony, damned vice, beneath this rain,

E'en as thou seest, I with fatigue am worn;
Nor I sole spirit in this woe: all these
Have by like crime incurred like punishment."

No more he said, and I my speech resumed:
"Ciaccio! thy dire affliction grieves me much,
Even to tears. But tell me, if thou knowest,
What shall at length befall the citizens
Of the divided city; whether any
Just one inhabit there: and tell the cause,
Whence jarring discord hath assailed it thus?"

He then: "After long striving they will
come

To blood; and the wild party from the woods
Will chase the other with much injury forth.
Then it behoves, that this must fall, within
Three solar circles; and the other rise
By borrowed force of one, who under shore
Now rests. It shall a long space hold aloof
Its forehead, keeping under heavy weight
The other opprest, indignant at the load,
And grieving sore. The just are two in number,

But they neglected. Avarice, envy, pride,
Three fatal sparks, have set the hearts of all
On fire." Here ceased the lamentable sound;
And I continued thus: "Still would I learn
More from thee, further parley still entreat.
Of Farinata and Tegghiaio say,
They who so well deserved; of Giacopo,
Arrigo, Mosca, and the rest, who bent

Their minds on working good. Oh! tell me
where

They bide, and to their knowledge let me come.
For I am prest with keen desire to hear
If heaven's sweet cup or poisonous drug of
hell,

Be to their lips assigned." He answered
straight:

"These are yet blacker spirits. Various crimes
Have sunk them deeper in the dark abyss.
If thou so far descendest, thou mayst see
them.

But to the pleasant world when thou return-
est,

Of me make mention, I entreat thee, there.
No more I tell thee, answer thee no more."

This said, his fixed eyes he turned askance,
A little eyed me, then bent down his head,
And 'midst his blind companions with it fell.

When thus my guide: "No more his bed
he leaves,

Ere the last angel-trumpet blow. The Power
Adverse to these shall then in glory come,
Each one forthwith to his sad tomb repair,
Resume his fleshly vesture and his form,
And hear the eternal doom re-echoing rend
The vault." So passed we through that mix-
ture foul

Of spirits and rain, with tardy steps; mean-
while

Touching, though slightly, on the life to come.

For thus I questioned: "Shall these tortures,
Sir!

When the great sentence passes, be increased,
Or mitigated, or as now severe?"

He then: "Consult thy knowledge; that decides

That, as each thing to more perfection grows,
It feels more sensibly both good and pain.
Though ne'er to true perfection may arrive
This race accurst, yet nearer then, than now,
They shall approach it." Compassing that
path,

Circuitous we journeyed, and discourse,
Much more than I relate between us passed:
Till at the point, whence the steps led below,
Arrived, there Plutus, the great foe, we found.

CANTO VII.

ARGUMENT.

In the present Canto, Dante describes his descent into the fourth circle, at the beginning of which he sees Plutus stationed. Here one like doom awaits the prodigal and the avaricious; which is, to meet in direful conflict, rolling great weights against each other with mutual upbraidings. From hence Virgil takes occasion to show how vain the goods that are committed into the charge of Fortune; and this moves our author to inquire what being that Fortune is, of whom he speaks: which question being resolved, they go down into the fifth circle, where they find the wrathful and slothful tormented in the Stygian lake. Having made a compass round great part of this lake, they come at last to the base of a lofty tower.

"Ah me! O Satan! Satan!" loud exclaimed
Plutus, in accent hoarse of wild alarm:
And the kind sage, whom no event surprised,
To comfort me thus spake: "Let not thy fear
Harm thee, for power in him, be sure, is none
To hinder down this rock thy safe descent."
Then to that swoln lip turning, "Peace!" he
cried,

"Curst wolf! thy fury inward on thyself
Prey, and consume thee! Through the dark
profound

Not without cause he passes. So 'tis willed
On high, there where the great Archangel
poured

Heaven's vengeance on the first adulterer
proud."

As sails, full spread and bellying with the
wind,

Drop suddenly collapsed, if the mast split;
So to the ground down dropped the cruel fiend.

Thus we, descending to the fourth steep
ledge,

Gained on the dismal shore, that all the woe
Hems in of all the universe. Ah me!

Almighty Justice! in what store thou heap'st
New pains, new troubles, as I here beheld.

Wherefore doth fault of ours bring us to this?

E'en as a billow, on Charybdis rising,
Against encountered billow dashing breaks;
Such is the dance this wretched race must
lead,

Whom more than elsewhere numerous here I
found,

From one side and the other, with loud voice,
Both rolled on weights, by main force of their
breasts,

Then smote together, and each one forthwith
Rolled them back voluble, turning again;
Exclaiming these, "Why holdest thou so fast?"
Those answering, "And why castest thou
away!"

So, still repeating their despitful song,
They to the opposite point on either hand,
Traversed the horrid circle: then arrived,
Both turned them round, and through the mid-
dle space

Conflicting met again. At sight whereof
I, stung with grief, thus spake: "O say, my
guide!

What race is this? Were these, whose heads
are shorn,

On our left hand, all separate to the church?"

He straight replied: "In their first life,
these all

In mind were so distorted, that they made,
According to due measure, of their wealth
No use. This clearly from their words collect,
Which they howl forth, at each extremity
Arriving of the circle, where their crime
Contrary in kind disparts them. To the
church

Were separate those, that with no hairy cowls

Are crowned, both Popes and Cardinals, o'er
whom

Avarice dominion absolute maintains."

I then: "'Mid such as these some needs
must be,

Whom I shall recognize, that with the blot
Of these foul sins were stained." He answer-
ing thus:

"Vain thought conceivest thou. That ignoble
life,

Which made them vile before, now makes
them dark,

And to all knowledge indiscernible.

Forever they shall meet in this rude shock:

These from the tomb with clenched grasp shall
rise,

Those with close-shaven locks. That ill they
gave,

And ill they kept, hath of the beauteous world
Deprived, and set them at this strife, which
needs

No labored phrase of mine to set it off.

Now mayest thou see, my son! how brief. how
vain,

The goods committed into Fortune's hands,
For which the human race keep such a coil!
Not all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or ever hath been, of these toil-worn souls
Might purchase rest for one." I thus rejoined:
"My guide! of thee this also would I learn;
This fortune, that thou speakest of, what it is,

Whose talons grasp the blessings of the world?"

He thus: "O beings blind! what ignorance Besets you? Now my judgment hear and mark.

He, whose transcendent wisdom passes all,
The heavens creating, gave them ruling powers

To guide them; so that each part shines to each,

Their light in equal distribution poured.

By similar appointment he ordained

Over the world's bright images to rule,

Superintendence of a guiding hand

And general minister, which, at due time

May change the empty vantages of life

From race to race, from one to other's blood,

Beyond prevention of man's wisest care:

Wherefore one nation rises into sway,

Another languishes, e'en as her will

Decrees, from us concealed, as in the grass

The serpent train. Against her naught avails

Your utmost wisdom. She with foresight plans,

Judges, and carries on her reign, as theirs

The other powers divine. Her changes know

None intermission: by necessity

She is made swift, so frequent come who claim

Succession in her favors. This is she,

So execrated e'en by those whose debt

To her is rather praise; they wrongfully

With blame requite her, and with evil word;
But she is blessed, and for that reck not:
Amidst the other primal beings glad,
Rolls on her sphere, and in her bliss exults.
Now on our way pass we, to heavier woe
Descending: for each star is falling now,
That mounted at our entrance, and forbids
Too long our tarrying." We the circle crossed
To the next steep, arriving at a well,
That boiling pours itself down to a foss
Sluiced from its source. Far murkier was the
wave

Than sablest grain: and we in company
Of the inky waters, journeying by their side,
Entered, though by a different track, beneath.
Into a lake, the Stygian named, expands
The dismal stream, when it hath reached the
foot

Of the gray withered cliffs. Intent I stood
To gaze, and in the marish sunk descried
A miry tribe, all naked, and with looks
Betokening rage. They with their hands alone
Stuck not, but with the head, the breast, the
feet,

Cutting each other piecemeal with their fangs.

The good instructor spake: "Now seest thou,
son!

The souls of those, whom anger overcame.
This too for certain know, that underneath
The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs
Into these bubbles make the surface heave

As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turn.
Fixed in the slime, they say: 'Sad once were
we

In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun,
Carrying a foul and lazy mist within:
Now in these murky settlings are we sad.
Such dolorous strain they gurgle in their
throats.

But word distinct can utter none." Our route
Thus compassed we, a segment widely
stretched

Between the dry embankment, and the core
Of the loathed pool, turning meanwhile our
eyes

Downward on those who gulped its muddy
lees;

Nor stopped, till to a tower's low base we
come.

CANTO VIII.

ARGUMENT.

A signal having been made from the tower, Phlegyas, the ferryman of the lake, speedily crosses it, and conveys Virgil and Dante to the other side. On their passage, they meet with Filippo Argenti, whose fury and torment are described. They then arrive at the city of Dis, the entrance whereto is denied, and the portals closed against them by many Demons.

My theme pursuing, I relate, that ere
We reached the lofty turret's base, our eyes
Its height ascended, where we marked uphung

In answer set: what agency doth this?"

If the marsh-gendered fog conceal it not."

**Toward us coming, under the sole sway
Of one that ferried it, who cried aloud:**

"This time thou criest in vain," my lord replied;

"No longer shalt thou have us, but while o'er
The slimy pool we pass." As one who hears
Of some great wrong he hath sustained, where-
at

Inly he pines: so Phlegyas inly pined
In his fierce ire. My guide, descending, stepped
In to the skiff, and bade me enter next,
Close at his side; nor, till my entrance, seemed
The vessel freighted. Soon as both embarked,

Cutting the waves, goes on the ancient prow,
More deeply than with others it is wont.

While we our course o'er the dead channel
held,
One drenched in mire before me came, and
said:

"Who art thou, that thus comest ere thine
hour?"

I answered: "Though I come, I tarry not:
But who art thou, that art become so foul?"

"One, as thou seest, who mourns:" he straight
replied.

To which I thus: "In mourning and in woe,
Curst spirit! tarry thou. I know thee well,
E'en thus in filth disguised." Then stretched
he forth

Hands to the bark; whereof my teacher sage
Aware, thrusting him back: "Away! down
there

To the other dogs!" then with his arms my neck
Encircling, kissed my cheek, and spake: "O
soul,

Justly disdainful! blest was she in whom
Thou wast conceived. He in the world was one
For arrogance noted: to his memory

No virtue lends its lustre; even so
Here is his shadow furious. There above,
How many now hold themselves mighty kings,
Who here like swine shall wallow in the mire,
Leaving behind them horrible dispraise."

I then: "Master! him fain would I behold

Whelmed in these dregs. before we quit the lake."

He thus: "Or ever to thy view the shore
Be offered, satisfied shall be that wish,
Which well deserves completion." Scarce his words

Were ended. when I saw the miry tribes
Set on him with such violence, that yet
For that render I thanks to God, and praise
"To Filippo Argenti!" cried they all:
And on himself the moody Florentine
Turned his avenging fangs. Him here we left,
Nor speak I of him more. But on mine ear
Sudden a sound of lamentation smote,
Whereat mine eye unbarred I sent abroad.

And thus the good instructor: "Now, my son
Draws near the city, that of Dis is named,
With its grave denizens, a mighty throng."

I thus: "The minarets already, Sir!
There, certes, in the valley I descry,
Gleaming vermilion, as if they from fire
Had issued." He replied: "Eternal fire,
That inward burns, shows them with ruddy
flame

Illumed; as in this nether hell thou seest."

We came within the fosses deep, that moat.
This region comfortless. The walls appeared
As they were framed of iron. We had made
Wide circuit, ere a place we reached, where
loud

The mariner cried vehement: "Go forth:

The entrance is here." Upon the gates I spied
More than a thousand, who of old from heaven
Were showered. With ireful gestures, "Who is
this,"

They cried, "that, without death first felt,
goes through

The regions of the dead?" My sapient guide
Made sign that he for secret parley wished:
Whereat their angry scorn abating, thus
They spake: "Come thou alone; and let h'm go,
Who hath so hardily entered this realm.
Alone return he by his witless way;
If well he know it, let him prove. For thee,
Here shalt thou tarry, who through clime so
dark

Hast been his escort." Now bethink thee,
reader!

What cheer was fine at sound of those curst
words.

I did believe I never should return.

"O my loved guide! who more than seven
times

Security hast rendered me, and drawn
From peril deep, whereto I stood exposed,
Desert me not," I cried, "in this extreme.
And, if our onward going be denied,
Together trace we back our steps with speed."

My liege, who thither had conducted me,
Replied: "Fear not: for of our passage none
Hath power to disappoint us, by such high
Authority permitted. But do thou

Expect me here; meanwhile, thy wearied spirit
Comfort, and feed with kindly hope, assured
I will not leave thee in this lower world."

This said, departs the sire benevolent,
And quits me. Hesitating I remain
At war, 'twixt will and will not, in my thoughts.

I could not hear what terms he offered them,
But they conferred not long, for all at once
Pellmell rushed back within. Closed were the
gates,

By those our adversaries, on the breast
Of my liege lord: excluded, he returned
To me with tardy steps. Upon the ground
His eyes were bent, and from his brow erased
All confidence, while thus in sighs he spake:
"Who hath denied me these abodes of woe?"
Then thus to me: "That I am angered, think
No ground of terror; in this trial I
Shall vanquish, use what arts they may within
For hindrance. This their insolence, not new,
Erewhile at gate less secret they displayed,
Which still is without bolt; upon its arch
Thou saw'st the deadly scroll; and even now,
On this side of its entrance, down the steep,
Passing the circles, unescorted, comes
One whose strong might can open us this land."

CANTO IX.

ARGUMENT.

After some hindrances, and having seen the
hellish furies and other monsters, the Poet, by
the help of an angel, enters the city of Dis.

wherein he discovers that the heretics are punished in tombs burning with intense fire: and he, together with Virgil, passes onwards between the sepulchres and the walls of the city.

THE hue, which coward dread on my pale cheeks

Imprinted when I saw my guide turn back,
Chased that from his which newly they had worn,

And inwardly restrained it. He, as one
Who listens, stood attentive: for his eye
Not far could lead him through the sable air,
And the thick-gathering cloud. "It yet behoves

We win this fight;" thus he began: "if not—
Such aid to us is offered.—Oh! how long
Meseems it, ere the promised help arrive."

I noted how the sequel of his words
Cloaked their beginning; for the last he spake
Agreed not with the first. But not the less
My fear was at his saying; sith I drew
To import worse, perchance, than that he held.
His mutilated speech. "Doth ever any
Into his rueful concave's extreme depth
Descend out of the first degree, whose pain
Is deprivation merely of sweet hope?"

Thus I inquiring, "Rarely," he replied,
"It chances, that among us any makes
This journey, which I wend. Erewhile, 'tis true,
Once came I here beneath, conjured by fell
Erictho, sorceress, who compelled the shades
Back to their bodies. No long space my flesh

Was naked of me, when within these walls
She made me enter, to draw forth a spirit
From out of Judas' circle. Lowest place
Is that of all, obscurest, and removed
Furthest from heaven's all circling orb. The
road

Full well I know; thou therefore rest secure.
That lake, the noisome stench exhaling, round
The city of grief encompasses, which now
We may not enter without rage." Yet more
He added: but I hold it not in mind,
For that mine eye toward the lofty tower
Had drawn me wholly, to its burning top;
Where, in an instant, I beheld uprisen
At once three hellish furies stained with blood.
In limb and motion feminine they seemed;
Around them greenest hydras twisting rolled
Their volumes; adders and cerastes crept
Instead of hair, and their fierce temples bound.

He, knowing well the miserable hags
Who tend the queen of endless woe, thus
spake:

"Mark thou each dire Erinnyes. To the left,
This is Megaera; on the right hand, she
Who wails, Alecto; and Tisiphone
I' th' midst." This said, in silence he re-
mained.

Their breast they each one clawing tore; them-
selves
Smote with their palms, and such thrill clamor
raised

That to the bard I clung, suspicion-bound.

"Hasten Medusa: so to adamant

Him shall we change;" all looking down exclaimed:

"E'en when by Theseus' might assailed, we took

No ill revenge." "Turn thyself around, and keep

Thy countenance hid; for if the Gorgon dire
Be shown, and thou shouldst view it, thy return

Upwards would be forever lost." This said,
Himself, my gentle master, turned me round;

Nor trusted he my hands, but with his own

He also hid me. Ye of intellect

Sound and entire, mark well the lore concealed
Under close texture of the mystic strain.

And now there came o'er the perturbed waves

Loud-crashing, terrible, a sound that made

Either shore tremble, as if of a wind

Impetuous, from conflicting vapors sprung,

That 'gainst some forest driving all his might,

Plucks off the branches, beats them down, and

hurls

Afar; then onward passing, proudly sweeps

His whirlwind rage, while beasts and shepherd
herds fly.

Mine eyes he loosed, and spake: "And now direct

Thy visual nerve along that ancient foam,

There, thickest where the smoke ascends." As
frogs

Before their foe the serpent, through the wave
Ply swiftly all, till at the ground each one
Lies on a heap; more than a thousand spirits
Destroyed, so saw I fleeing before one
Who passed with unwet feet the Stygian sound
He, from his face removing the gross air,
Oft his left hand forth stretched, and seemed
alone

By that annoyance wearied. I perceived
That he was sent from heaven; and to my
guide

Turned me, who signal made, that I should stand
Quiet, and bend to him. Ah me! how full
Of noble anger seemed he. To the gate
He came, and with his wand touched it, where-
at

Open without impediment it flew.

"Outcasts of heaven! O abject race, and
scorned!"

Began he, on the horrid grunsel standing,
"Whence doth this wild excess of insolence
Lodge in you? wherefore kick you 'gainst that
will

Ne'er frustrate of its end, and which so oft
Hath laid on you enforcement of your pangs?
What profits, at the fates to butt the horn?
Your Cerberus, if ye remember, hence
Bears still, peeled of their hair, his throat and
maw."

This said, he turned back o'er the filthy
way

And syllable to us spake none; but wore
The semblance of a man by other care
Beset, and keenly prest, than thought of him
Who in his presence stands. Then we our steps
Toward that territory moved, secure
After the hallowed words. We, unopposed,
There entered; and, my mind eager to learn
What state a fortress like to that might hold,
I, soon as entered, throw mine eye around,
And see, on every part, wide-stretching space,
Replete with bitter pain and torment ill.

As where Rhone stagnates on the plans of
Arles,
Or as at Pola, near Quarnaro's gulf,
That closes Italy and laves her bounds,
The place is all thick spread with æpulchres;
So was it here, save what in horror here
Excelled: for 'midst the graves were scattered
flames,
Wherewith intensely all throughout they
burned,
That iron for no craft there hotter needs.

Their lids all hung suspended; and beneath
From them forth issued lamentable moans,
Such as the sad and tortured will might raise

I thus: "Master! say who are these, interred
Within these vaults, of whom distinct we hear
The dolorous sighs." He answer thus returned:
"The arch-heretics are here, accompanied
By every sect their followers; and much more,
Than thou believest, the tombs are freighted:
like

With like is buried; and the monuments
Are different in degrees of heat." This said,
He to the right hand turning, on we passed
Betwixt the afflicted and the ramparts high.

CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, having obtained permission from his guide, holds discourse with Farinata degli Uberti and Cavalcanti, who lie in their fiery tombs that are yet open, and not to be closed up till after the last judgment. Farinata predicts the Poet's exile from Florence; and shows him that the condemned have knowledge of future things, but are ignorant of what is at present passing, unless it be revealed by some new-comer from earth.

Now by a secret pathway we proceed,
Between the walls, that hem the region round.
And the tormented souls: my master first.
I close behind his steps. "Virtue supreme!"
I thus began: "Who through these ample orbs
In circuit lead'st me, even as thou wilt;
Speak thou, and satisfy my wish. May those,
Who lie within these sepulchres, be seen?
Already all the lids are raised, and none
O'er them keeps watch." He thus in answer
spake:

"They shall be closed all, what-time they here
From Josaphat returned shall come, and bring
Their bodies, which above they now have left.
The cemetery on this part obtain,
With Epicurus, all his followers,

Who with the body make the spirit die.
Here therefore satisfaction shall be soon,
Both to the question asked, and to the wish
Which thou conceal'st in silence." I replied:
"I keep not, guide beloved! from thee my heart
Secreted, but to shun vain length of words:
A lesson erewhile taught me by thyself."
"O Tuscan! thou, who through the city of fire
Alive art passing, so discreet of speech:
Here, please thee, stay awhile. Thy utterance
Declares the place of thy nativity
To be that noble land, with which perchance
I too severely dealt." Sudden that sound
Forth issued from a vault, whereat, in fear,
I somewhat closer to my leader's side
Approaching, he thus spake: "What dost thou?
Turn:

Lo! Farinata there, who hath himself
Uplifted: from his girdle upwards, all
Exposed, behold him." On his face was mine
Already fixed: his breast and forehead there
Erecting, seemed as in high scorn he held
E'en hell. Between the sepulchres, to him
My guide thrust me, with fearless hands and
prompt;

This warning added: "See thy words be clear."

He, soon as there I stood at the tomb's foot,
Eyed me a space; then in disdainful mood
Addressed me: "Say what ancestors were
thine."

I. willing to obey him, straight revealed

The whole, nor kept back aught: whence he,
his brow
Somewhat uplifting, cried: "Fiercely were they
Adverse to me, my party, and the blood
From whence I sprang: twice, therefore, I
abroad
Scattered them." "Though driven out, yet they
each time
From all parts," answered I, "returned; an art
Which yours have shown they are not skilled
to learn."

Then, peering forth from the unclosed jaw,
Rose from his side a shade, high as the chin,
Leaning, methought, upon its knees upraised.
It looked around, as eager to explore
If there were other with me; but perceiving
That fond imagination quenched, with tears
Thus spake: "If thou through this blind prison
go'st,
Led by thy lofty genius and profound,
Where is my son? and wherefore not with
thee?"

I straight replied: "Not of myself I come;
By him, who there expects me, through this
clime
Conducted, whom perchance Guido thy son
Had in contempt." Already had his words
And mode of punishment read me his name,
Whence I so fully answered. He at once
Exclaimed, up starting, "How! said'st thou, he
had?"

No longer lives he? Strikes not on his eye
The blessed daylight?" Then, of some delay
I made ere my reply, aware, down fell
Supine, nor after forth appeared he more.

Meanwhile the other, great of soul, near
whom

I yet was stationed, changed not countenance
stern,

Nor moved the neck, nor bent his ribbed side.

"And if," continuing the first discourse,

"They in this art," he cried, "small skill have
shown;

That doth torment me more e'en than this
bed.

But not yet fifty times shall be relumed

Her aspect, who reigns here queen of this
realm,

Ere thou shalt know the full weight of that
art,

So to the pleasant world mayst thou return,

As thou shalt tell me why, in all their laws,

Against my kin this people is so fell."

"The slaughter and great havoc," I replied,

"That colored Arbia's food with crimson stain—

To these impute, that in our hallowed dome

Such orisons ascend." Sighing he shook

The head, then thus resumed: "In that affray

I stood not singly, nor, without just cause,

Assuredly, should with the rest have stirred;

But singly there I stood, when, by consent

Of all, Florence had to the ground been razed,

The one who openly forbade the deed."

"So may thy lineage find at last repose,"
I thus adjured him, "as thou solve this knot,
Which now involves my mind. If right, I hear
Ye seem to view beforehand that which time
Leads with him, of the present uninformed."

"We view, as one who hath an evil sight,"
He answered, "plainly, objects far remote;
Sō much of his large splendor yet imparts
The Almighty Ruler: but when they approach
Or actually exist, our intellect
Then wholly fails; nor of your human state,
Except what others bring us, know we aught
Hence therefore mayst thou understand, that
all

Our knowledge in that instant shall expire,
When on futurity the portals close."

Then conscious of my fault, and by remorse
Smitten, I added thus: "Now shalt thou say
To him there fallen, that his offspring still
Is to the living joined; and bid him know,
That if from answer, silent, I abstained,
'Twas that my thought was occupied, intent
Upon that error, which thy help hath solved."

But now my master summoning me back
I heard, and with more eager haste besought
The spirit to inform me, who with him
Partook his lot. He answer thus returned:
"More than a thousand with me here are **laid**.
Within is Frederick, second of that name,
And the Lord Cardinal; and of the rest

I speak not." He, this said, from sight with
drew.

But I my steps toward the ancient bard
Reverting ruminated on the words
Betokening me such ill. Onward he moved,
And thus, in going, questioned: "Whence the
amaze

That holds thy senses wrapt?" I satisfied
The inquiry, and the sage enjoined me
straight:

"Let thy safe memory store what thou hast
heard

To thee importing harm; and note thou this,"
With his raised finger bidding me take heed,
"When thou shalt stand before her gracious
beam,

Whose bright eye all surveys, she of thy life
The future tenor will to thee unfold."

Forthwith he to the left hand turned his
feet:

We left the wall, and towards the middle space
Went by a path that to a valley strikes,
Which e'en thus high exhaled its noisome
steam.

CANTO XI.

ARGUMENT

Dante arrives at the verge of a rocky precipice which encloses the seventh circle, where he sees the sepulchre of Anastasius the Heretic; behind the lid of which pausing a little, to make himself capable by degrees of enduring the fetid

smell that steamed upward from the abyss, he is instructed by Virgil concerning the manner in which the three following circles are disposed, and what description of sinners is punished in each. He then inquires the reason why the carnal, the gluttonous, the avaricious and prodigal, the wrathful and gloomy, suffer not their punishments within the city of Dis. He next asks how the crime of usury is an offence against God; and at length the two Poets go towards the place from whence a passage leads down to the seventh circle.

UPON the utmost verge of a high bank,
By craggy rocks environed round, we came,
Where woes beneath, more cruel yet, were
stowed:

And here, to shun the horrible excess
Of fetid exhalation upward cast
From the profound abyss, behind the lid
Of a great monument we stood retired,
Whereon this scroll I marked: "I have in
charge

Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus drew
From the right path."—"Ere our descent, be-
hoves

We make delay, that somewhat first the sense,
To the dire breath accustomed, afterward
Regard it not." My master thus; to whom
Answering I spake: "Some compensation find,
That the time pass not wholly lost." He then,
"Lo! how my thoughts e'en to thy wishes tend.
My son! within these rocks," he thus began,
"Are three close circles in gradation placed.
As these which now thou leavest. Each one
is full

Of spirits accurst; but that the sight alone
Hereafter may suffice thee, listen how
And for what cause in durance they abide.

"Of all malicious act abhorred in heaven,
The end is injury; and all such end
Either by force or fraud works other's woe.
But fraud, because of man peculiar evil,
To God is more displeasing; and beneath,
The fraudulent are therefore doomed to endure
Severer pang. The violent occupy
All the first circle; and because, to force,
Three persons are obnoxious, in three rounds.
Each within other separate, is it framed.
To God, his neighbor, and himself, by man
Force may be offered; to himself I say,
And his possessions, as thou shalt hear
At full. Death, violent death, and painful
wounds

Upon his neighbor he inflicts; and wastes,
By devastation, pillage, and the flames,
His substance. Slayers, and each one that
smites

In malice, plunderers, and all robbers, hence
The torment undergo of the first round,
In different herds. Man can do violence
To himself and his own blessings: and for
this,

He, in the second round must aye deplore
With unavailing penitence his crime,
Whoe'er deprives himself of life and light,
In reckless lavishment his talent wastes,

And sorrows there where he should dwell in
joy

To God may force be offered, in the heart
Denying and blaspheming his high power,
And Nature with her kindly law contemning.
And thence the inmost round marks with its
seal

Sodom, and Cahors, and all such as speak
Contemptuously of the Godhead in their hearts.

"Fraud, that in every conscience leaves a
sting,

May be by man employed on one, whose trust
He wins, or on another who withholds
Strict confidence. Seems as the latter way
Broke but the bond of love which Nature
makes.

Whence in the second circle have their nest,
Dissimulation, witchcraft, flatteries,
Theft, falsehood, simony, all who seduce
To lust, or set their honesty at pawn,
With such vile scum as these. The other way
Forgets both Nature's general love, and that
Which thereto added afterwards gives birth
To special faith. Whence in the lesser circle,
Point of the universe, dread seat of Dis,
The traitor is eternally consumed."

I thus: "Instructor, clearly thy discourse
Proceeds, distinguishing the hideous chasm
And its inhabitants with skill exact.
But tell me this: they of the dull, fat pool,
Whom the rain beats, or whom the tempest
drives,

Or who with tongues so fierce conflicting meet,
Wherefore within the city fire-illumed
Are not these punished, if God's wrath be on
them?

And if it be not, wherefore in such guise
Are they condemned?" He answer thus re-
turned:

"Wherefore in dotage wanders thus thy mind,
Not so accustomed? or what other thoughts
Possess it? Dwell not in thy memory
Incontinence, malice, and mad brutishness.
And how incontinence the least offends
God, and least guilt incurs? If well thou note
This judgment, and remember who they are,
Without these walls to vain repentance doomed,
Thou shalt discern why they apart are placed
From these fell spirits, and less wreakful pours
Justice divine on them its vengeance down."

"O sun! who healest all imperfect sight,
The words, wherein thy ethic page describes
Thou so content'st me, when thou solvest my
doubt,

That ignorance not less than knowledge
charms.

Yet somewhat turn thee back," I in these
words

Continued, "where thou said'st, that usury
Offends celestial Goodness; and this knot
Perplexed unravel." He thus made reply:

"Philosophy, to an attentive ear,
Clearly points out, not in one part alone,

How imitative Nature takes her course
From the celestial mind, and from its art:
And where her laws the Stagirite unfolds,
Not many leaves scanned o'er, observing well
Thou shalt discover, that your art on her
Obsequious follows, as the learner treads
In his instructor's step; so that your art
Deserves the name of second in descent
From God. These two, if thou recall to mind
Creation's holy book, from the beginning
Were the right source of life and excellence
To human kind. But in another path
The usurer walks; and Nature in herself
And in her follower thus he sets at naught,
Placing elsewhere his hope. But follow now
My steps on forward journey bent; for now
The Pisces play with undulating glance
Along the horizon, and the Wain lies all
O'er the northwest; and onward there a space
Is our steep passage down the rocky height."

CANTO XII.

ARGUMENT.

Descending by a very rugged way into the seventh circle, where the violent are punished, Dante and his leader find it guarded by the Minotaur; whose fury being pacified by Virgil, they step downwards from crag to crag; till, drawing near the bottom, they descry a river of blood, wherein are tormented such as have committed violence against their neighbor. At these, when they strive to emerge from the blood, a troop of Centaurs, running along the side of the river, aim their arrows; and three

of their band opposing our travellers at the foot of the steep, Virgil prevails so far, that one consents to carry them both across the stream; and on their passage, Dante is informed by him of the course of the river, and of those that are punished therein.

THE place, where to descend the precipice
We came, was rough as Alp; and on its verge
Such object lay, as every eye would shun.

As is that ruin, which Adices' stream
On this side Trento struck, shouldering the
wave,

Or loosed by earthquake or for lack of prop;
For from the mountain's summit, whence it
moved

To the low level, so the headlong rock
Is shivered, that some passage it might give
To him who from above would pass; e'en such
Into the chasm was that descent: and there
At point of the disparted ridge lay stretched
The infamy of Crete, detested brood
Of the feigned heifer: and at sight of us
It gnawed itself, as one with rage distract.
To him my guide exclaimed: "Perchance thou
deem'st

The King of Athens here, who, in the world
Above, thy death contrived. Monster! avaunt!
He comes not tutored by thy sister's art,
But to behold your torments is he come."

Like to a bull, that with impetuous spring
Darts, at the moment when the fatal blow
Hath struck him, but unable to proceed
Plunges on either side; so saw I plunge

The Minotaur; whereat the sage exclaimed:
"Run to the passage! while he storms, 't is well
That thou descend." Thus down our road we
took

Through those dilapidated crags, that oft
Moved underneath my feet, to weight like
theirs

Unused. I pondering went, and thus he spake:
"Perhaps my thoughts are of this ruined steep,
Guarded by the brute violence, which I
Have vanquished now. Know then, that when
I erst

Hither descended to the nether hell,
This rock was not yet fallen. But past doubt,
(If well I mark) not long ere He arrived,
Who carried off from Dis the mighty spoil
Of the highest circle, then through all its
bounds

Such trembling seized the deep concave and
foul,

I thought the universe was thrilled with love,
Whereby, there are who deem, the world hath
oft

Been into chaos turned; and in that point
Here, and elsewhere, that old rock toppled
down.

But fix thine eyes beneath: the river of blood
Approaches, in the which all those are steeped
Who have by violence injured." O blind lust!
O foolish wrath! who so dost goad us on
In the brief life, and in the eternal then

Thus miserably o'erwhelm us. I beheld
An ample foss, that in a bow was bent,
As circling all the plain; for so my guide
Had told. Between it and the ramparts base,
On trail ran Centaurs, with keen arrows armed,
As to the chase they on earth were wont.

At seeing us descend they each one stood;
And issuing from the troop, three sped with
bows

And missile weapons chosen first; of whom
One cried from far: "Say, to what pain ye
come

Condemned, who down this steep have jour-
neyed. Speak

From whence ye stand, or else the bow I draw."

To whom my guide: "Our answer shall be
made

To Chiron, there, when nearer him we come.
Ill was thy mind, thus ever quick and rash."

Then me he touched, and spake: "Nessus is
this,

Who for the fair Delanira died,
And wrought himself revenge for his own fate.
He in the midst, that on his breast looks down,
Is the great Chiron who Achilles nursed;
That other, Pholus, prone to wrath." Around
The foss these go by thousands, aiming shafts
At whatsoever spirit dares emerge
From out the blood, more than his guilt al-
lows.

We to those beasts, that rapid strode along.

Drew near; when Chiron took an arrow forth,
And with the notch pushed back his shaggy
beard

To the cheek-bone, then, his great mouth to
view

Exposing to his fellows thus exclaimed:

"Are ye aware, that he who comes behind
Moves what he touches? The feet of the dead
Are not so wont." My trusty guide, who now
Stood near his breast, where the two natures
join,

Thus made reply: "He is indeed alive,
And solitary so must needs by me
Be shown the gloomy vale, thereto induced
By strict necessity, not by delight.
She left her joyful harpings in the sky,
Who this new office to my care consigned.
He is no robber, no dark spirit I.

But by that virtue, which empowers my step
To tread so wild a path, grant us, I pray,
One of thy band, whom we may trust secure.
Who to the ford may lead us, and convey
Across, him mounted on his back; for he
Is not a spirit that may walk the air."

Then on his right breast turning, Chiron
thus

To Nessus spake: "Return, and be their guide.
And if ye chance to cross another troop,
Command them keep aloof." Onward we
moved,

The faithful escort by our side, along
The border of the crimson-seething flood,

Whence, from those steeped within, loud shrieks arose.

Some there I marked, as high as to their brow

Immersed, of whom the mighty Centaur thus:
"These are the souls of tyrants. who were given

To blood and rapine. Here they wail aloud
Their merciless wrongs. Here Alexander dwells,

And Dionysius fell, who many a year
Of woe wrought for fair Sicily. That brow,
Whereon the hair so jetty clustering hangs,
Is Ezzolino; that with flaxen locks
Obizzo of Este, in the world destroyed
By his foul step-son." To the bard revered
I turned me round, and thus he spake: "Let him

Be to thee now first leader, me but next
To him in rank." Then further on a space
The Centaur paused, near some, who at the throat

Were extant from the wave; and, showing us
A spirit by itself apart retired,
Exclaimed: "He in God's bosom smote the heart,

Which yet is honored on the bank of Thames."

A race I next espied who held the head,
And even all the bust, above the stream.
'Midst these I many a face remembered well.
Thus shallow more and more the blood became,

So that at last it but imbrued the feet;
And there our passage lay athwart the foss.

"As ever on this side the boiling wave
Thou seest diminishing," the Centaur said,
"So on the other, be thou well assured,
It lower still and lower sinks its bed,
Till in that part it re-uniting join,
Where 't is the lot of tyranny to mourn.
There Heaven's stern justice lays chastising
hand

On Attila, who was the scourge of earth,
On Sextus and on Pyrrhus, and extracts
Tears ever by the seething flood unlocked
From the Rineri, of Corneto this,
Passo the other named, who filled the ways
With violence and war." This said, he turned,
And quitting us, alone repassed the ford.

CANTO XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Still in the seventh circle, Dante enters its second compartment, which contains both those who have done violence on their own persons and those who have violently consumed their goods; the first changed into rough and knotted trees whereon the Harpies build their nests, the latter chased and torn by black female mastiffs. Among the former, Piero delle Vigne is one who tells him the cause of his having committed suicide, and moreover in what manner the souls are transformed into those trunks. Of the latter crew, he recognizes Lano, a Siennese, and Giacomo, a Paduan: and lastly, a Florentine, who had hung himself from his own roof, speaks to him of the calamities of his countrymen. Ere Nessus yet had reached the other bank,

We entered on a forest, where no track
Of steps had worn a way. Not verdant there
The foliage, but of dusky hue; not light
The boughs and tapering, but with knares de-
formed—

And matted thick: fruits there were none, but
thorns

Instead, with venom filled. Less sharp than
these

Less intricate the brakes, wherein abide
Those animals, that hate the cultured fields
Betwixt Corneto and Cecina's stream.

Here the brute Harpies make their nest, the
same

Who from the Strophades the Trojan band
Drove with dire boding of their future woe,
Broad are their pennons of the human form
Their neck and countenance, armed with talons
keen

The feet, and the huge belly fledge with wings.
These sit and wail on the drear mystic wood.

The kind instructor in the words began:

"Ere further thou proceed, know thou art now
I' th' second round, and shalt be, till thou
come

Upon the horrid sand; look therefore well
Around thee, and such things thou shalt be-
hold,

As would my speech discredit." On all sides
I heard sad plainings breathe, and none could
see

From whom they might have issued. In amaze

Fast bound I stood. He, as it seemed, believed

That I had thought so many voices came
From some amid those thickets close concealed,
And thus his speech resumed: "If thou lop off
A single twig from one of those ill plants,
The thought thou hast conceived shall vanish
quite."

Thereat a little stretching forth my hand,
From a great wilding gathered I a branch,
And straight the trunk exclaimed: "Why
pluck'st thou me?"

Then, as the dark blood trickled down its side
These words it added: "Wherefore tear'st me
thus?

Is there no touch of mercy in thy breast?
Men once were we, that now are rooted here.
Thy hand might well have spared us, had we
been

The souls of serpents." As a brand yet green
That burning at one end from the other sends
A groaning sound, and hisses with the wind
That forces out its way, so burst at once
Forth from the broken splinter words and
blood.

I, letting fall the bough, remained as one
Assailed by terror; and the sage replied:
"If he, O injured spirit! could have believed
What he hath seen but in my verse described,
He never against thee had stretched his hand.
But I, because the thing surpassed belief,
Prompted him to this deed, which even now

Myself I rue. But tell me, who thou wast;
That, for this wrong to do thee some amends,
In the upper world (for thither to return
Is granted him) thy fame he may revive."

"That pleasant word of thine," the trunk replied,

"Hath so inveigled me, that I from speech
Cannot refrain, wherein if I indulge
A little longer, in the snare detained.
Count it not grievous. I it was, who held
Both keys to Frederick's heart, and turned the
wards,

Opening and shutting, with a skill so sweet.
That besides me, into his inmost breast
Scarce any other could admittance find.
The faith I bore to my high charge was such,
It cost me the life-blood that warmed my
veins.

The harlot, who ne'er turned her gloating eyes
From Caesar's household, common vice and pest
Of courts, 'gainst me inflamed the minds of
all;

And to Augustus they so spread the flames,
That my glad honors changed to bitter woes.
My soul, disdainful and disgusted, sought
Refuge in death from scorn, and I became,
Just as I was, unjust toward myself.

By the new roots, which fix this stem, I swear,
That never faith I broke to my liege lord,
Who merited such honor; and of you,
If any to the world indeed return,
Clear he from wrong my memory, that lies

Yet prostrate under envy's cruel blow."

First somewhat pausing, till the mournful
words

Were ended, then to me the bard began:

"Lose not the time; but speak, and of him
ask, [plied:

If more thou wish to learn." Whence I re-

"Question thou him again of whatsoe'r

Will, as thou think'st, content me; for no
power

Have I to ask, such pity is at my heart."

He thus resumed: "So may he do for thee
Freely what thou entreatest, as thou yet
Be pleased, imprisoned spirit! to declare,
How in these gnarled joints the soul is tied;
And whether any ever from such frame
Be loosened, if thou canst, that also tell."

Thereat the trunk breathed hard, and the
wind soon

Changed into sounds articulate like these:

"Briefly ye shall be answered. When departs

The fierce soul from the body, by itself

Thence torn asunder, to the seventh gulf

By Minos doomed, into the wood it falls,

No place assigned, but wheresoever chance

Hurls it; there sprouting, as a grain of spelt,
It rises to a sapling, growing thence

A savage plant. The Harpies, on its leaves

Then feeding, cause both pain, and for the
pain

A vent to grief. We, as the rest shall cor

For our own spoils, yet not so that with the

We may again be clad; for what a man
Takes from himself it is not just he have.
Here we perforce shall drag them; and
throughout

The dismal glade our bodies shall be hung,
Each on the wild thorn of his wretched shade."

Attentive yet to listen to the trunk

We stood, expecting further speech, when us
A noise surprised; as when a man perceives

The wild boar and the hunt approach his
place

Of stationed watch, who of the beasts and
boughs

Loud rustling round him hears. And lo! there
came

Two naked, torn with briers, in headlong flight,
That they before them broke each fan o' th'
wood.

"Haste now," the foremost cried, "now haste
thee, death!"

The other, as seemed, impatient of delay,

Exclaiming, "Lano! not so bent for speed

Thy sinews, in the lists of Toppo's field."

And then, for that perchance no longer breath
Sufficed him, of himself and of a bush

One group he made. Behind them was the
wood

Full of black female mastiffs, gaunt and fleet,
As greyhounds that have newly slipt the leash.

On him, who squatted down, they stuck their
fangs,

And having rent him piecemeal bore away
The tortured limbs. My guide then seized my
hand,

And led me to the thicket, which in vain
Mourned through its bleeding wounds: "O
Giacomo

O Sant' Andrea! what avails it thee,"

It cried, "that of me thou hast made thy
screen

For thy ill life, what blame on me recoils?"

When o'er it he had paused, my master
spake:

"Say who wast thou, that at so many points
Breathest out with blood thy lamentable
speech?"

He answered: "O ye spirits! arrived in time
To spy the shameful havoc that from me
My leaves hath severed thus, gather them up,
And at the foot of their sad parent-tree
Carefully lay them. In that city I dwelt,
Who for the Baptist her first patrons changed,
Whence he for this shall cease not with his
art [not

To work her woe: and if there still remained
On Arno's passage some faint glimpse of him,
Those citizens, who reared once more her walls
Upon the ashes left by Attila,
Had labored without profit of their toil
I slung the fatal noose from my own roof."

CANTO XIV.

ARGUMENT.

They arrive at the beginning of the third of those compartments into which this seventh circle is divided. It is a plain of dry and hot sand, where three kinds of violence are punished; namely, against God, against Nature, and against Art; and those who have thus sinned, are tormented by flakes of fire, which are eternally showering down upon them. Among the violent against God is found Capaneus, whose blasphemies they hear. Next, turning to the left along the forest of self-slayers, and having journeyed a little onwards, they meet with a streamlet of blood that issues from the forest and traverses the sandy plain. Here Virgil speaks to our Poet of a huge ancient statue that stands within Mount Ida in Crete, from a fissure in which statue there is a dripping of tears, from which the said streamlet, together with the three other infernal rivers, are formed.

Soon as the charity of native land
Wrought in my bosom, I the scattered leaves
Collected, and to him restored, who now
Was hoarse with utterance. To the limit thence
We came, which from the third the second
round

Divides, and where of justice is displayed
Contrivance horrible. Things then first seen
Clearer to manifest, I tell how next
A plain we reached, that from its sterile bed
Each plant repelled. The mournful wood waves
round

Its warland on all sides, as round the wood

Spreads the sad foss. There, on the very edge,
Our steps we stayed. It was an area wide
Of arid sand and thick, resembling most
The soil that erst by Cato's foot was trod.

Vengeance of heaven! Oh! how shouldst
thou be feared

By all, who read what here mine eyes beheld.

Of naked spirits many a flock I saw,
All weeping piteously, to different laws
Subjected; for on the earth some lay supine,
Some crouching close were seated, others paced
Incessantly around; the latter tribe
More numerous, those fewer who beneath
The torment lay, but louder in their grief.
O'er all the sand fell snowy wafting down
Dilated flakes of fire, as flakes of snow
On Alpine summit, when the wind is hushed.
As, in the torrid Indian clime, the son
Of Ammon saw, upon his warrior band
Descending, solid flames, that to the ground
Came down; when he bethought him with his
troop

To trample on the soil; for easier thus
The vapor was extinguished, while alone:
So fell the eternal fiery flood, wherewith
The marble glowed underneath, as under stove
The vlands, doubly to augment the pain.
Unceasing was the play of wretched hands,
Now this, now that way glancing, to shake off
The heat, still falling fresh. I thus began:
"Instructor! thou who all things overcomest,
Except the hardy demons that rushed forth

To stop our entrance at the gate, say who
Is yon huge spirit, that, as seems, heeds not
The burning, but lies writhen in proud scorn,
As by the sultry tempest immatured?"

Straight he himself, who was aware I asked
My guide of him, exclaimed: "Such as I was
When living, dead such now I am. If Jove
Weary his workman out, from whom in ire
He snatched the lightnings, that at my last day
Transfixed me; if the rest he weary out,
At their black smithy laboring by turns,
In Mongibello, while he cries aloud,
'Help, help, good Mulciber!' as erst he cried
In the Phlegræan warfare; and the bolts
Launch he, full aimed at me, with all his might;
He never should enjoy a sweet revenge."

Then thus my guide, in accents higher raised
Than I before had heard him: "Capaneus!
Thou art more punished, in that this thy pride
Lives yet unquenched: no torment, save thy
rage,

Were to thy fury pain proportioned full."

Next turning round to me, with milder lip
He spake: "This of the seven kings was one,
Who girt the Theban walls with siege, and held,
As still he seems to hold, God in disdain,
And sets his high omnipotence at naught.
But, as I told him, his despitful mood
Is ornament well suits the breast that wears it.
Follow me now: and look thou set not yet
Thy foot in the hot sand, but to the wood
Keep ever close." Silently on we passed

To where there gushes from the forest's bound
A little brook, whose crimsoned wave yet lifts
My hair with horror. As the rill, that runs
From Bulicame, to be portioned out
Among the sinful women, so ran this
Down through the sand; its bottom and each
bank

Stone-built, and either margin at its side,
Whereon I straight perceived our passage lay.

"Of all that I have shown thee, since that
gate

We entered first, whose threshold is to none
Denied, naught else so worthy of regard,
As is this river, has thine eye discerned,
O'er which the flaming volley all is quenched."

So spake my guide; and I him thence be
sought,

That having given me appetite to know,
The food he too would give, that hunger craved.

"In midst of ocean," forthwith he began,

"A desolate country lies, which Crete is named;
Under whose monarch, in old times, the world
Lived pure and chaste. A mountain rises there,
Called Ida, joyous once with leaves and streams,
Deserted now like a forbidden thing.

It was the spot which Rhea, Saturn's spouse,
Chose for the secret cradle of her son;
And better to conceal him, drowned in shouts
His infant cries. Within the mount, upright
An ancient form there stands, and huge, that
turns

His shoulders towards Damietta; and at Rome.
As in his mirror, looks. Of finest gold
His head is shaped, pure silver are the breast
And arms, thence to the middle is of brass,
And downward all beneath well-tempered steel,
Save the right foot of potter's clay, on which
Than on the other more erect he stands.
Each part, except the gold, is rent throughout;
And from the fissure tears distil, which joined
Penetrate to that cave. They in their course,
Thus far precipitated down the rock,
Form Acheron, and Styx, and Phlegethon;
Then by this straitened channel passing hence
Beneath, e'en to the lowest depth of all,
Form there Cocytus, of whose lake (thyself
Shalt see it) I here give thee no account."

Then I to him: "If from our world this sluice
Be thus derived; wherefore to us but now
Appears it at this edge?" He straight replied:
"The place, thou know'st, is round. and though
great part

Thou hast already past, still to the left
Descending to the nethermost, not yet
Hast thou the circuit made of the whole orb.
Wherefore, if aught of new to us appear,
It needs not bring up yonder in thy looks."

Then I again inquired: "Where flow the
streams
Of Phlegethon and Lethe? for of one
Thou tell'st not; and the other, of that shower,
Thou say'st, is formed." He answer thus re-
turned:

"Doubtless thy questions all well pleased I hear.
Yet the red seething wave might have resolved
One thou proposest. Lethe thou shalt see,
But not within this hollow, in the place
Whither, to lave themselves, the spirits go.
Whose blame hath been by penitence removed."
He added: "Time is now we quit the wood.
Look thou my steps pursue: the margins give
Safe passage, unimpeded by the flames;
For over them all vapor is extinct."

CANTO XV.

One of the solid margins bear us now
Enveloped in the mist, that, from the stream
Arising, hovers o'er, and saves from fire
Both pliers and water. As the Flemings rear
Their mound, 'twixt Ghent and Bruges, to chase
back

The ocean, fearing his tumultuous tide
That drives toward them; or the Paduans theirs
Along the Brenta, to defend their towns
And castles, ere the genial warmth be felt
On Chiarentana's top; such were the mounds,
So framed, though not in height or bulk to these
Made equal, by the master, whoso'er
He was, that raised them here. We from the
wood

Were now so far removed, that turning round
I might not have discerned it, when we met
A troop of spirits, who came beside the pier.
They each one eyed us, as at eventide

One eyes another under a new moon;
And toward us sharpened their sight, as keen
As an old tailor at his needle's eye.

Thus narrowly explored by all the tribe,
I was agonized of one, who by the skirt
Caught me, and cried, "What wonder have we
here?"

And I, when he to me outstretched his arm,
Intently fixed by ken on his parched looks,
That although smirched with fire, they hindered not

But I remembered him; and towards his face
My hand inclining, answered: "Sir! Brunetto!
And are ye here?" He thus at me: "My son!
Oh let it not displease thee, if Brunetto
Latini but a little space with thee
Turn back, and leave his fellows to proceed."

I thus to him replied: "Much as I can,
I thereto pray thee; and if thou be willing
That I here seat me with thee, I consent;
His leave, with whom I journey, first obtained."

"Oh son!" said he, "whoever of this throng
One instant stops, lies then a hundred years,
No fan to ventilate him, when the fire
Smites sorest. Pass thou therefore on. I close
Will at thy garments walk, and then rejoin
My troop, who go mourning their endless
doom."

I dared not from the path descend to tread
On ground equal with him, but held my head
Bent down as one who walks in reverent guise.

"What chance or destiny," thus he began,

"Ere the last day, conducts thee here below?
And who is this that shows to thee the way?"

"There up aloft," I answered, "in the life
Serene, I wandered in a valley lost,
Before mine age had to its fulness reached.
But yester-morn I left it: then once more
Into that vale returning, him I met;
And by this path homeward he leads me back."

"If thou," he answered, "follow but thy star,
Thou canst not miss at last a glorious haven;
Unless in fairer days my judgment erred.
And if my fate so early had not chanced,
Seeing the heavens thus bounteous to thee, I
Had gladly given thee comfort in thy work.
But that ungrateful and malignant race,
Who in old times came down from Fiesole,
Ay and still smack of their rough mountain-
flint,

Will for thy good deeds show thee enmity.
Nor wonder; for amongst ill-savored crabs
It suits not the sweet fig-tree lay her fruit.
Old fame reports them in the world for blind,
Covetous, envious, proud. Look to it well:
Take heed thou cleanse thee of their wares. For
thee,

Thy fortune hath such honor in reserve,
That thou by either party shalt be craved
With hunger keen: but be the fresh herb far
From the goat's tooth. The herd of Fiesole
May of themselves make little, not touch the
plant,

If any such yet spring on their rank bed,

in which the holy seed revives, transmitted
From those true Romans, who still there re-
mained,

When it was made the nest of so much ill."

"Were all my wish fulfilled," I straight re-
plied,

"Thou from the confines of man's nature yet
Hadst not been driven forth; for in my mind
Is fixed, and now strikes full upon my heart,
The dear, benign, paternal image, such
As thine was, when so lately thou didst teach
me

The way for man to win eternity.

And how I prized the lesson, it bears,
That long as life endures, my tongue should
speak

What of my fate thou tellest, that I write I
down;

And, with another text to comment on,
For her I keep it, the celestial dame,
Who will know all, if I to her arrive.

This only would I have thee clearly note:

That, so my conscience have no plea against
me,

Do Fortune as she list, I stand prepared.

Not new or strange such earnest to mine ear.
Speed Fortune then her wheel, as likes her
best;

The clown his mattock; all things have their
course."

Thereat my sapient guide upon his right

Turned himself back, then looked at me, and
spake:

"He listens to good purpose who takes note."

I not the less still on my way proceed,
Discoursing with Brunetto and inquire,
Who are most known as chief among his tribe.

"To know of some is well;" he thus replied.

"But of the rest silence may best beseem.

Time would not serve us for report so long.

In brief I tell thee, that all these were clerks,

Men of great learning and no less renown,

By one same sin polluted in the world.

With them is Priscian; and Accorso's son.

Francesco, herds among that wretched throng:

And, if the wish or so impure a blotch

Possessed thee, him thou also mightst have
seen,

Who by the servants' servant was transferred

From Arno's seat to Bacchiglione, where

His ill-strained nerves he left. I more would
add,

But must from further speech and onward way

Alike desist; for yonder I behold

A mist new-risen on the sandy plain.

A company, with whom I may not sort,

Approaches. I commend my *Treasure* to thee,

Wherein I yet survive; my sole request."

This said, he turned, and seem as one of
those

Who o'er Verona's champion try their speed

For the green mantle; and of them he seemed,

Not he who loses but who gains the prize.

CANTO XVI.

Now came I where the water's din was heard,
As down it fell into the other round,
Resounding like the hum of swarming bees:
When forth together issued from a troop,
That passed beneath the fierce tormenting
storm,

Three spirits, running swift. They towards us
came,

And each one cried aloud, "Oh! do thou stay,
Whom, by the fashion of thy garb, we deem
To be some inmate of our evil land."

Ah me! what wounds I marked upon their
limbs,

Recent and old, inflicted by the flames.
E'en the remembrance of them grieves me yet.

Attentive to their cry, my teacher paused,
And turned to me his visage, and then spake:
"Wait now: our courtesy these merit well:
And were't not for the nature of the place,
Whence glide the fiery darts, I should have
said,

That haste had better suited thee than them."

They, when we stopped, resumed their an-
cient wail,

And, soon as they had reached us, all the three
Whirled round together in one restless wheel.
As naked champions, smeared with slippery oil
Are wont, intent, to watch their place of hold
And vantage, ere in closer strife they meet;
Thus each one as he wheeled, his countenance
At me directed, so that opposite

The neck moved ever to the twinkling feet.

"If woe of this unsound and dreary waste,"

Thus one began, "added to our sad cheer

Thus peeled with flame, do call forth scorn on
us

And our entreaties, let our great renown

Incline thee to inform us who thou art,

That dost imprint, with living feet unharmed,

The soil of Hell. He, in whose track thou
seest

My steps pursuing, naked though he be

And reft of all, was of more high estate

Than thou believest; grandchild of the chaste
Gualdrada, him they Guldoguerra called.

Who in his lifetime many a noble act

Achieved, both by his wisdom and his sword.

The other, next to me that beats the sand,

Is Aldobrandi, name deserving well,

In the upper world, of honor; and myself,

Who in this torment do partake with them,

Am Rusticucci, whom, past doubt, my wife,

Of savage temper, more than aught beside

Hath to this evil brought." If from the fire

I had been sheltered, down amidst them
straight

I then had cast me; nor my guide, I deem,

Would have restrained my going; but that fear

Of the dire burning vanquished the desire,

Which made me eager of their wished embrace.

I then began: "Not scorn, but grief much
more,

Such as long time alone can cure, your doom

Fixed deep within me, soon this my lord
Spake words, whose tenor taught me to expect
That such a race, as ye are, was at hand
I am a countryman of yours, who still
Affectionate have uttered, and have heard
Your deeds and names renowned. Leaving the
gall,

For the sweet fruit I go, that a sure guide
Hath promised to me. But behoves, that far
As to the centre first I downward tend."

"So may long space thy spirit guide thy
limbs,"

He answer straight returned; "and so thy
fame
Shine bright when thou art gone, as thou shalt
tell,

If courtesy and valor, as they wont,
Dwell in our city, or have vanished clean:
For one amidst us late condemned to wail,
Borslere, yonder walking with his peers,
Grieves us no little by the news he brings."

"An upstart multitude and sudden gains,
Pride and excess, O Florence. have in thee
Engendered, so that now in tears thou
mourn'st!"

Thus cried I, with my face upraised, and
they

All three, who for an answer took my words,
Looked at each other, as men look when truth
Comes to their ear. "If at so little cost,"
They all at once rejoined, "thou satisfy
Others who question thee, O happy thou!

Gifted with words so apt to speak thy thought
Wherefore, if thou escape this darksome clime,
Returning to behold the radiant stars,
When thou with pleasure shalt retrace the
past,

See that of us thou speak among mankind."

This said, they broke the circle, and so
swift

Fled, that as pinions seemed their nimble feet.

Not in so short a time might one have said
"Amen," as they had vanished. Straight my
guide

Pursued his track. I followed: and small space
Had we past onward, when the water's sound
Was now so near at hand, that we had scarce
Heard one another's speech for the loud din.

E'en as the river, that first holds its course
Unmingled from the Mount of Vesulo,
On the left side of Apennine, toward
The east, which Acquacheta higher up
They call, ere it descend into the vale,
At Forli, by that name no longer known,
Rebellows o'er Saint Benedict, rolled on
From the Alpine summit down a precipice,
Where space enough to lodge a thousand
spreads;

Thus downward from a craggy steep we found
That this dark wave resounded, roaring loud,
So that the ear its clamor soon had stunned.

I had a cord that graced my girdle round,
Wherewith I erst had thought fast bound to

The painted leopard. This when I had all
Unloosened from me (so my master bade)
I gathered up, and stretched it forth to him.
Then to the right he turned and from the
brink

Standing few paces distant, cast it down
Into the deep abyss. "And somewhat strange,"
Thus to myself I spake, "signal so strange
Betokens, which my guide with earnest eye
Thus follows." Ah! what caution must men
use

With those who look not at the deed alone,
But spy into the thoughts with subtle skill.

"Quickly shall come," he said, "what I expect;

Thine eye discover quickly that, whereof
Thy thought is reaming." Ever to that truth,
Which but the semblance of a falsehood wears,
A man, if possible, should bar his lip;
Since, although blameless, he incurs reproach.
But silence here were vain; and by these notes,
Which now I sing, reader, I swear to thee,
So may they favor find to latest times!
That through the gross and murky air I spied
A shape come swimming up, that might have
quelled

The stoutest heart with wonder; in such guise
As one returns, who hath been down to loose
An anchor grappled fast against some rock,
Or to aught else that in the salt wave lies,
Who, upward springing, close draws in his
feet.

CANTO XVII.

"Lo! the fell monster with the deadly sting,
Who passes mountains, breaks through fenced
walls

And firm embattled spears, and with his filth
Taints all the world." Thus me my guide ad-
dressed,

And beckoned him, that he should come to
shore,

Near to the stony causeway's utmost edge.

Forthwith that image vile of Fraud ap-
peared.

His head and upper part exposed on land,
But laid not on the shore his bestial train.

His face the semblance of a just man's wore
So kind and gracious was its outward cheer,
The rest was serpent all; two shaggy claws
Reached to the arm-pits; and the back and
breast,

And either side, were painted o'er with nodes
And orbits. Colors variegated more

Nor Turks nor Tartars e'er on cloth of state
With interchangeable embroidery wove,

Nor spread Arachne o'er her curious loom.

As oft-times a light skiff, moored to the shore,
Stands part in water, part upon the land;

Or, as where dwells the greedy German boor,
The beaver settles, watching for his prey;

So on the rim, that fenced the sand with rock,
Sat perched the fiend of evil. In the void

Glancing, his tail upturned its venomous fork,
With sting like scorpions armed. Then thus
my guide:

"Now need our way must turn few steps apart,
Far as to that ill beast, who couches there."

Thereat, toward the right our downward
course

We shaped, and, better to escape the flame
And burning marle, ten paces on the verge
Proceeded. Soon as we to him arrive,

A little further on mine eye beholds
A tribe of spirits, seated on the sand
Near to the void. Forthwith my master spake:
"That to the full thy knowledge may extend
Of all this round contains, go now, and mark
The mien these wear: but hold not long dis-
course.

Till thou returnest, I with him meantime
Will parley, that to us he may vouchsafe
The aid of his strong shoulders." Thus alone,
Yet forward on the extremity I paced

Of that seventh circle, where the mournful
tribe [pangs.

Were seated. At the eyes forth gushed their
Against the vapors and the torrid soil
Alternately their shifting hands they plied.
Thus use the dogs in summer still to ply
Their jaws and feet by turns, when bitten sore
By gnats, or flies, or gadflies swarming round.

Noting the visages of some, who lay
Beneath the pelting of that dolorous fire,
One of them all I knew not; but perceived,

That pendent from his neck each bore a pouch
With colors and with emblems various marked.
On which it seemed as if their eye did feed.

And when, amongst them, looking round I
came,

A yellow purse I saw with azure wrought,
That wore a lion's countenance and port.
Then, still my sight pursuing its career,
Another I beheld, than blood more red
A goose display of white wing than curd.
And one, who bore a fat and azure swine
Pictured on his white scrip, addressed me thus:

"What dost thou in this deep? Go now and
know,

Since yet thou livest, that my neighbor here
Vitaliano on my left shall sit.

A Paduan with these Florentines am I
Of times thy thunder in mine ears, exclaiming,
'Oh! haste that noble knight, he who the pouch
With the three goats will bring.'" This said,
he writhed

The mouth, and lolled the tongue out, like an
ox

That licks his nostrils. I, lest longer stay
He ill might brook, who bade me stay not long.
Backward my steps from those sad spirits
turned.

My guide already seated on the haunch
Of the fierce animal I found; and thus
He me encouraged. "Be thou stout: be bold.
Down such a steep flight must we now descend,
Mount thou before: for, that no power the tail

May have to harm thee, I will be i' th' midst."

As one, who hath an ague fit so near,
His nails already are turned blue, and he
Quivers all o'er, if he but eye the shade;
Such was my cheer at hearing of his words.
But shame soon interposed her threat, who
makes

The servant bold in presence of his lord.

I settled me upon those shoulders huge,
And would have said, but that the words to aid
My purpose came not, "Look thou clasp me
firm."

But he whose succor then not first I proved,
Soon as I mounted, in his arms aloft,
Embracing, held me up; and thus he spake:
"Geryon! now move thee: be thy wheeling
gyres

Om ample circuit, easy they descend.

Think on the unusual burden thou sustainest."

As a small vessel, backening out from land.
Her station quits; so thence the monster
loosed,

And, when he felt himself at large, turned
round

There, where the breast had been, his forked
tail,

Thus, like an eel, outstretched at length he
steered

Gathering the air up with retractile claws.

Not greater was the dread, when Phaethon
The reins let drop at random, whence high
heaven,

Whereof signs yet appear, was wrapt in flames;
Nor when ill-fated Icarus perceived,
By liquefaction of the scalded wax,
The trusted pennons loosened from his loins,
His sire exclaiming loud, "Ill way thou
keep'st,"

Than was my dread, when round me on each
The air I viewed, and other object none [part
Save the fell beast. He, slowly sailing, wheels
His downward motion, unobserved of me.
But that the wind, arising to my face,
Breathes on me from below. Now on our
right

I heard the cataract beneath us leap
With hideous crash; whence bending down to
explore,

New terror I conceived at the steep plunge;
For flames I saw, and wailings smote mine ear;
So that, all trembling, close I crouched my
limbs,

And then distinguished, unperceived before,
By the dread torments that on every side
Drew nearer, how our downward course we
wound.

As falcon, that hath long been on the wing,
But lure nor bird hath seen, while in despair,
The falconer cries, "Ah me! thou stoop'st to
earth."

Wearied descends, whence nimbly he arose
In many an air wheel, and lighting
At distance from his lord in angry mood

So Geryon lighting places us on foot
Low down at base of the deep-furrowed rock,
And, of his burden there discharged, forthwith
Sprang forward, like an arrow from the string.

End of Volume I.



